

# Crawley Borough Council

## Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 6 September 2021

**Cabinet**  
**8 September 2021**

### **Petition “Keep your dog on a lead in Tilgate Park”**

Joint report of the Head of Community Services  
and Head of Legal, Governance & HR – the Petitions Officer, **HCS/30**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The Council’s Petitions Officer received and accepted petition of 139 valid signatures entitled ‘*Keep your dog on a lead in Tilgate Park*’ and as such is required to be debated at the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, before their views are passed to the Cabinet as the relevant decision maker for their consideration and response.
- 1.2 To help consider the petition in context, the report also provides evidence in response to Residents’ requests to provide clear on site signage and increase patrols to enforce dogs kept on leads at Tilgate Park (lake).

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission consider, the petition, the statement of the petitioner and the background report and decide what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Cabinet for a decision and response to the Principal Petitioner.

- 2.2 To the Cabinet:

That the Cabinet considers the findings and any comments submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, along with the petition, the statement of the petitioner and the background report, in making its decision.

#### **3. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 3.1 To ensure the procedure for petitions as detailed in the Council’s Constitution is adhered to.

#### **4. The Petition and the Procedure**

- 4.1 The Council’s Petitions Officer received an e-petition through the Council’s portal entitled *Keep your dog on a lead in Tilgate Park*.

4.2 The petition states as follows “**Keep your dog on a lead in Tilgate Park**”

*We the undersigned petition the council to increase signage and warden patrol around Tilgate lake to ensure dogs are kept on leads while walking around the lake. To implement enforcement of rules are not adhered too.*

*My dog was attacked while walking around the lake by a dog that was not kept on its lead. The rules are clear on the website, however there isn't sufficient signage and enforcement of rules for dog owners not adhering to the rules. Therefore increased presence of signage, policing and enforcement is required.*

4.3 On reviewing the petition and in line with the Council Petitions Scheme the petition was accepted with 139 valid signatures. As a result of the size of the petition it is sent to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for their consideration and review.

4.4 The petition along with view of the Commission is then submitted to the appropriate decision maker in this case the Cabinet for their consideration and responses.

4.5 At both meetings the Principal Petitioner is entitled to address the Councillors over their petitions. In line with Committee Procedure Rules for both meetings, the Principal Petitioner will be invited to address the Cabinet or Committee for a maximum of 3 minutes on the issue.

4.6 The Cabinet is required to provide the Principal Petitioner with written confirmation of their decision. The confirmation will also be published on the Council's website within the minutes.

## **5. Background behind the Petition**

5.1 The petition requests that the Council increases on site information signage and Community Warden patrols to inform and enforce the 'rules' stated on the Council's website requiring dogs to be kept on leads in Tilgate Park, specifically around the lake.

5.2 Tilgate Park is a regional destination park as well as a much loved local facility. Covering 162 hectares, the Green Flag accredited park welcomes around 1 million visitors a year and has been increasingly used throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The management team have to balance the wide ranging needs of user groups, both human and animal.

5.3 The council recognises that many dog owners who visit Tilgate Park are responsible; they keep their dog under control and exercise it in a manner that doesn't cause distress to other park users. However, the council does have to deal with complaints each year about irresponsible ownership and the impact on the public.

5.4 There are clear rules in place for Tilgate Park (displayed on the Council's website) requiring “Dogs must be kept on a lead whilst walking around the main lake and are not permitted to enter the water”. Dogs are not permitted at all in the Nature Centre, Walled Garden or play area.

5.5 Dogs are permitted off lead in all other areas of the park.

5.6 This issue was previously explored in 2017 after concerns were raised by the Friends of Tilgate Park, in response to concerns about the protection of wildlife in the park, in particular nesting swans. A public consultation took place which resulted in 146

external responses from park users who gave their views. 54% of responders were against a 'dogs on leads' policy and 46% supported its introduction.

- 5.7 The Cabinet Member for Wellbeing subsequently agreed the introduction of a range of information/education measures focused around the lake area.
- 5.8 Tilgate Park is one of several patrol 'hotspots' for the Community Warden Service, albeit their wide ranging priorities across the borough limit the regularity and duration of patrols. Community Wardens encourage members of the public to put their dog on a lead when they are out of control and / or causing nuisance to other park users however they do not enforce non-compliance.
- 5.9 Signage requesting for dogs to be on leads is routinely removed and/or vandalised.

## **6. Key Areas for Consideration**

6.1 The key areas for consideration are as follows:

- Tilgate Park policy and rules state that dogs should be kept on leads around the lake. Other than a few specified areas, dogs are permitted off lead in most of the park's 162 hectares.
- A public consultation took place in 2017 which resulted in 146 external responses from park users who gave their views. The majority (54%) did not support a "dogs on leads" policy, although there was significant support for it to be introduced (46%).
- Current policy, to educate/inform dog owners to put their dogs on leads, has largely been unsuccessful with signage repeatedly being removed or vandalised and community warden intervention often ignored.
- So far in 2021, there have been 9 formal reports involving dogs off leads in Tilgate Park (8 Council & 1 police reports). Complaints typically relate to the lake area (and main lawn). Anecdotally, complaints on social media channels have increased and staff have witnessed dogs causing nuisance to other park users during their working day.
- There have been 22 dog related reports made to Sussex Police over a three year period (2018 – 2021). As a comparison, 267 reports were made to Sussex Police over a similar timeframe when considering enforcement options for ASB relating to car cruising.
- There are a range of options open to the Council, each with pros and cons. These include;
  - Maintain current position
  - Re-double education/information efforts
  - Introduce enforcement alongside education/information

Each option has a resourcing and budgetary implication ranging from £0 to £3,500, assuming no increase to the Community Wardens establishment.

- This issue has polarised opinion, as seen in the results of the public consultation in 2017. Moving to an enforcement model will penalise responsible dog owners although will act as a greater deterrent to those owners that do not have their dogs under control and cause nuisance to other park users.

- Enforcement will not stop all antisocial behaviour around the lake, it will, though, help act as a deterrent.

## 7 Information & Analysis

- 7.1 The Head of Community Services has consulted with the Head of Legal, Governance & HR regarding the issues raised.

### Dogs in Tilgate Park - Rules / Byelaws

- 7.2 Dogs are welcome in Tilgate Park and permitted in most areas, with the exception of the Walled Garden, Nature Centre, play area and in the lake itself.

- 7.3 Rules on the Crawley Borough Council [website](#) state that;

- Dogs must be kept on a lead whilst walking around the main lake and are not permitted to enter the water.
- Dogs are not permitted in the Nature Centre, Walled Garden or play area

- 7.4 Section 10 of The Byelaws for Goffs Park and Tilgate Park (1968) states that;

**10. A person shall not cause or suffer any dog belonging to him or in his charge to enter or remain in the Park, unless such dog be and continue to be under proper control, and be effectually restrained from causing annoyance to any person, and from worrying or disturbing any animal or waterfowl, and from entering the Lakes or any ornamental water.**

- 7.5 The dogs on leads rule is robustly applied in the Walled Garden and Nature Centre, both supervised areas, and there is generally good compliance in the play area despite it being unsupervised.

- 7.6 Dogs are permitted off lead in all other areas of the park (total site is approximately 162 hectares).

### Consultation

- 7.7 This issue was previously explored in 2017 in response to concerns about the protection of wildlife in the park, in particular nesting swans. A public consultation took place which resulted in 146 external responses from residents who gave their views. The majority (54%) did not support a “dogs on leads” policy, although there was strong support for it to be introduced (46%). The results of the consultation can be found at Appendix A.

- 7.8 The Cabinet Member for Wellbeing subsequently agreed the introduction of a range of information / education measures focused on the main lake area;
- Placement of signage encouraging the public to keep their dogs on leads
  - Focused patrols by the Community Wardens service, encouraging the public to keep their dogs on leads
  - Production and distribution of an education leaflet for dog owners
  - Exploration of enforcement options available to the Council including a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)
  - Exploration of dedicated secure space to exercise dogs off leads

### Effectiveness of current/historic approaches

- 7.9 Information signage placed around the lake encouraging the public to keep their dogs on leads has repeatedly and routinely been removed or vandalised.
- 7.10 An information leaflet designed to educate dog owners was produced in 2017/18 and distributed by the Community Wardens during a period of focused daily patrols between February and June 2018. These patrols were largely unsuccessful due to the reluctance of many dog walkers to comply. The ongoing removal of signage led to a lack of understanding by dog owners about what was allowed and where, making challenge difficult. The lack of enforcement option was also problematic in securing compliance.
- 7.11 Tilgate Park is now one of several patrol ‘hotspots’ for the Council’s Community Warden Service, albeit their wide ranging priorities across the borough limit the regularity and duration of patrols. Community Wardens encourage members of the public to put their dog on a lead when they are deemed out of control and / or causing nuisance to other park users however they do not enforce non-compliance. The service respond to incidents of antisocial behaviour within core service hours (08:00 – 21:30, seven days a week), however any concerns relating to possible criminal activity should be reported to the police.
- 7.12 ‘Hound Ground’ a dedicated exercise space for dogs, opened at Tilgate Park in 2021 however it was temporarily closed soon after as a precautionary measure on safety grounds. Solutions are currently being explored and the facility remains closed.
- 7.13 Officers previously explored the enforcement options available to the Council, including Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). The Council has successfully implemented PSPOs to address anti-social behaviour issues relating to car cruising and consumption of alcohol in public places. This has not been pursued for dog related matters prior to now because of the preference for an incremental approach to managing the issue, focusing primarily on education of dog walkers. There is also a requirement for any PSPO to be supported by strong evidence of need.

### What evidence do we have?

- 7.14 Formally reported incidents and complaints to the Council relating to nuisance dogs at Tilgate Park are relatively low (8 since December 2020), and largely focus on dogs not being under control and causing annoyance/distress to others, interfering with picnics or over inquisitiveness. There are also complaints relating to interference with wildlife on the lake. Examples of the complaints that have been received can be found at Appendix B.
- 7.15 There have been 22 dog related reports made to Sussex Police over a three year period, one of which was made in 2021. 14 complaints (63%) involved a dog off lead, including the report made in 2021. A breakdown of the report “types” are shown below. As a comparison, 267 reports were made to Sussex Police over a similar timeframe when considering enforcement options for ASB relating to car cruising.

Dog v Dog	2 reports
Dog v Human	3 reports (in 2 instances “over excited” dogs)
Dog v Wildlife	3 reports (1 swan, 1 deer, 1 not clear dogs involved)
Out of Control/Dangerous	2 reports
Other	4 reports

- 7.16 Anecdotally, the parks team have witnessed incidents where dogs have been off lead, interfered with another park user(s) and not responded to owners command. Whilst the dogs in these instances have not typically behaved aggressively, they have been a nuisance and on occasion caused annoyance/distress to young children/other park users. They have also noticed an increase in comments on social media about nuisance dogs.

Where and when are issues arising?

- 7.17 The complaints are typically focused on the lake and main lawn area. To significantly extend the scope of the dogs on leads policy in terms of geographic coverage could be disproportionate to the issue identified in the petition and the evidence available. It is also important to note that Tilgate Park is a vast site covering over 160 acres and it would be impossible to patrol and enforce the entire estate effectively with current resources. Complaints are received all year round.

Options for consideration

- 7.18 There are three broad options that have been considered which are set out below. These focus on the lake area in Tilgate Park in line with the petition, although if the policy coverage expands then the associated resource would need to expand proportionately. Pros & cons for each option can be found at Appendix C.

7.19 **Option 1: Maintain current position**

- Sporadic patrols by Community Wardens
- Challenge and encourage owners where dogs appear out of control / dogs causing nuisance OR could challenge all dogs off leads
- Replace temporary signage intermittently

The additional resource implications for this option are negligible with related costs already managed within existing budgets. This option would not require resources to be diverted from other priority work.

7.20 **Option 2: Re-double education / information efforts**

- Install more robust signage (vandal proof)
- Implement Communication Plan incl. Social media & park based campaign
- Dedicated daily Community Warden Patrols (2 – 6\* hours per day)
- Challenge and encourage owners of dogs off leads

\* depends on shift patterns / numbers on shift / other priorities but minimum of 2 hrs per day at key times is possible within existing resource.

There are resource implications for this option. The cost of signage (purchase, installation and replacement) is approximately £3,500. There is no provision for this expenditure within current budgets. There is also an impact on the Community Wardens team. By committing to dedicated daily patrols at Tilgate Park, it would see Wardens diverted from other priority work OR require additional resource. The patrols can of course include other priorities such as littering enforcement. The cost of a FTE post is approximately £27,500 per annum.

## 7.21 **Option 3: Option 2 + Enforcement**

- Introduce preferred enforcement approach (CBC Byelaws / Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) / Community Protection Notice (Warning))

As well as those already identified in section 7.20, there are additional resourcing implications for this option, however these differ according to which approach is adopted. This is considered in the section below. It is important to manage public expectation because the enforcement options are reliant on officers (Council and Police) with the relevant authority being present to witness the infringement.

7.22 The enforcement options available to the Council are as follows;

### **Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)**

A PSPO is designed to address unreasonable and persistent behaviour that affects the quality of life of a local authority's residents. PSPOs last for 3 years unless extended before they expire. PSPOs can only be made where the Council is satisfied on reasonable grounds (i.e. there is evidence demonstrating):

- that there has been (or it is likely to be) activities carried on in a public place which have had (or are likely to have) a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality,
- the effect (or likely effect) of the activities:
  - is (or is likely to be) of a persistent or continuing nature,
  - is (or is likely to be) such as to make the activities unreasonable.
  - justifies the restrictions imposed.

#### **Pros**

- Once made, enforcement can be via Fixed Penalty Notice (immediate).

#### **Cons**

- Cannot be made if there is not an evidence base to meet the statutory threshold.
- Lengthy and resource-intensive to make a PSPO, including public consultation (6 month process)
- If FPN is not paid, prosecution is the next step which can be lengthy and is resource-intensive.
- Resources required for enforcement (personnel on the ground required).

### **Byelaws**

These are local rules made by local authorities but approved by central government which are enforceable as criminal offences.

Byelaws are quite an old fashioned way of dealing with local public order rules and parliament has indicated that matters such as the control of dogs ought to be dealt with under the new types of orders which it has created – the current one being PSPOs which replaced dog control orders.

It therefore appears that in practice the legal route to making byelaws relating to dogs is effectively closed and should CBC make byelaws and seek to have them

confirmed by the Secretary of State (the procedure to make them valid), we may find that this request is refused leading to wasted effort, time and expense.

### **Community Protection Notices (CPNs)**

CPNs can be served if satisfied on reasonable grounds that:

- The conduct of the person is having a detrimental effect, of a persistent or continuing nature, on the quality of life of those in the locality, and
- the conduct is unreasonable.

However, there are preconditions to service of a CPN, which are:

- a written warning must first have been given to the person stating that the CPN will be issued unless the person's conduct ceases to have the detrimental effect, and
- the officer is satisfied that, despite the person having had enough time to deal with the matter, their conduct is still having that effect.

#### Pros

- Could be useful for repeat offenders if they can be identified.
- Enforcement can be via FPN (immediate).
- Reasonably straightforward and quick to introduce.

#### Cons

- Somewhat impractical for 'on the spot' one-off enforcement as written warnings are required.
- If a person does not provide their identity it would be very difficult, if not possible, to enforce without police assistance.
- If FPN not paid, prosecution is the next step which can be lengthy and is resource-intensive.
- Resources required for enforcement (personnel on the ground required)

- 7.23 Whilst this legislation is not part of the consideration for this petition, it is useful to note the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, section 3, requires that dogs must not be allowed to be 'dangerously out of control', which means injuring someone or making someone fear they may be injured. This applies to any breed or type of dog. This is usually enforced by the Police. [Guidance from DEFRA](#) states that "this section should only be used in the most serious incidents".

## **8 Implications**

- 8.1 The Council is under pressure to meet its obligation to deliver a balanced budget and any commitment to increase patrols and/or enforcing a "dogs on leads" policy at Tilgate Park would likely need to come from existing resources, diverting resource from other priority work.
- 8.2 Revenue resource, in the region of £3,500, would be required to invest in permanent signage in key locations. An additional FTE Community Warden would cost £27,500 per annum.
- 8.3 There would be legal costs associated with enforcement policy related prosecutions although full costs would be sought from the courts in the case of a successful prosecution.



- 8.4 Any decision taken is likely to polarise opinion, as seen by the results of the public consultation in 2017. Moving to an enforcement model will penalise responsible dog owners although will act as a greater deterrent to those owners that do not have their dogs under control and cause nuisance to other park users.
- 8.5 There are no equalities impacts because assistance dogs are exempt from the dogs on leads policy and any associated enforcement.

## **9 Background Papers**

None

Report author and contact officer:

Kate Wilson, Head of Community Services

Siraj Choudhury, Petition Officer & Head of Legal, Governance & HR

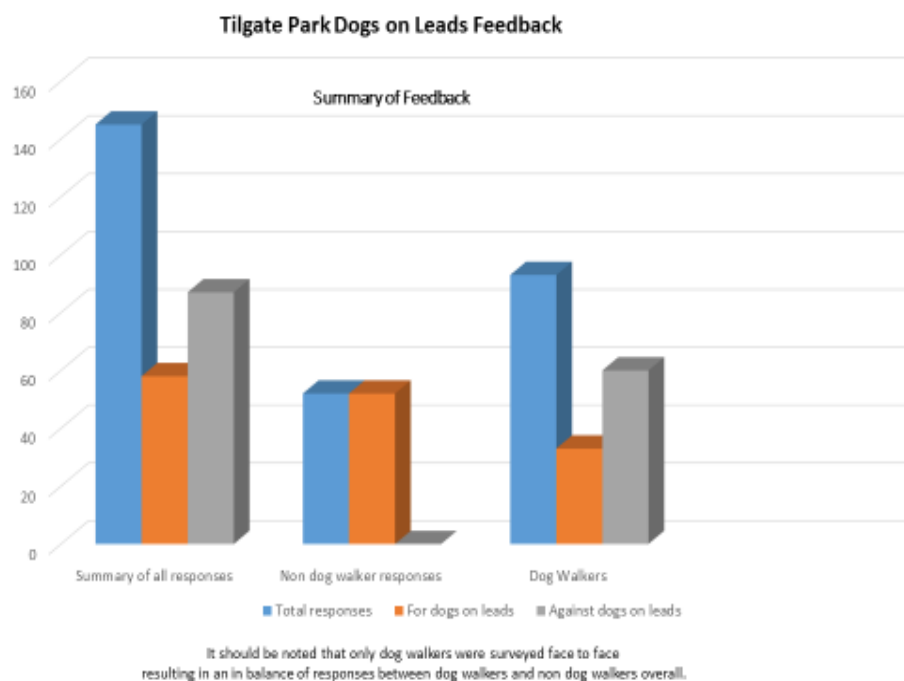
## Appendix A

### Responses to 2017 Consultation

146 responses received

46% supported the dogs on leads policy around the lake

54% did not support the dogs on leads policy around the lake



Post Code	Do you use Tilgate Park to walk your dog	Do you think there should be a dogs on lead policy around the lake	Additional comments
RH10	YES	NO	Breed and size of dog
RH10	YES	NO	My dog is only small. Leads should be on bigger dogs
RH10	YES	NO	Depends on size and breed of dog
RH10	YES	NO	My dogs wouldn't hurt a swan she's too small
RH11	YES	NO	Maybe during breeding season
RH12	YES	NO	Restrictions if needed
RH10	YES	NO	Have notices when needed. Put on swans close to protect dog and swans
RH10	YES	NO	How would it be enforced
RH10	YES	NO	Should be down to individual dog owners discretion
RH10	YES	NO	Dependant on owner
RH11	YES	NO	Down to owner

RH11	YES	NO	Down to owner
RH10	YES	NO	Owner fault
RH11	YES	NO	Punish irresponsible owners not everyone else
RH10	YES	NO	Dogs should be under control
RH12	YES	NO	My dog is trained
BN13	YES	NO	Owner responsibility
RH10	YES	NO	As long as owners can keep dogs under control
RH2	YES	NO	Should depend on dog and if under control by owner
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair to responsible owners
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair to responsible owners
RH10	YES	NO	Not all dogs are vicious
RH10	YES	NO	Not all dogs are attackers
RH10	YES	NO	Not everyone should be punished
BN3	YES	NO	It's a lovely place to let dogs run free
RH11	YES	NO	safe area to allow dogs off lead
RH10	YES	NO	will go somewhere else if enforced
RH10	YES	NO	will go somewhere else if enforced
RH10	YES	NO	
RH10	YES	NO	
RH6	YES	NO	Only the unruly dogs
RH11	YES	NO	don't punish everyone
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair to responsible owners
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair to responsible owners
RH10	YES	NO	my dog hates being on lead
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair to responsible owners
RH10	YES	NO	unfair to punish everyone
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair to responsible owners
RH11	YES	NO	Unfair
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair
RH10	YES	NO	unfair on others
RH11	YES	NO	only place I will let my dog off lead
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair
RH11	YES	NO	unfair to treat all the same
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair
RH10	YES	NO	Unfair
RH10	YES	NO	unfair to others
RH10	YES	NO	not fair to responsible dog owners
U/K	YES	NO	All dog owners should not be punished for the few that have aggressive dogs that attack wildlife.
U/K	YES	NO	I love to walk around tilgate and often my dog is on or off the lead depending on how busy it is. It would be a great shame ...

U/K	YES	NO	I walk my dog around the lake with my children. My dog with well behaved . Tilgate is the only place I can take the three of them and walk like this. If there was a dog on the lead rule around the lake he wouldn't get enough exercise. I also run with him and he can dip in to cool off in the water. an on the lead rule would be impossible to police and only punishes good dog owners
U/K	YES	NO	Dogs should be allowed to be off lead. My dog has never caused any problems. I walk and run with him and he loves to swim in the lake
U/K	YES	NO	Dogs off lead please my Lab would never hurt a fly and loves her walks at Tilgate off lead
U/K	YES	NO	A well trained dog wouldn't go anywhere near those birds. Why penalise the majority for the few?
U/K	YES	NO	Dogs need to be off lead to exercise properly whether running around or walking beside you. It is a sad fact that animal instinct kicks in sometimes
U/K	YES	NO	Dogs should not have to be on leads. How can they swim in the lake on a lead. I walk off the lead but put my dog back on lead near as we pass swans. He needs to go into the lake to cool down in the summer. Why should the irresponsible few spoil it for the majority. It's the first year dogs have caused a death as far as I'm aware.
BN3	YES	NO	
RH10	YES	NO	
RH10	YES	NO	
RH10	YES	NO	
BN3	YES	NO	
RH10	YES	NO	
RH10	YES	NO	
RH10	YES	NO	
RH11	YES	NO	
RH10	YES	NO	Donald Campbell donated the park to Crawley residents. Why do we have to pay for parking?
RH10	YES	YES	Responsible owners won't mind
RH10	YES	YES	Enough other places to walk off lead
?	YES	YES	Can walk up by woodland
RH10	YES	YES	
RH11	YES	YES	lots of dogs can be intimidating
RH10	YES	YES	Yes on lead when close to lake
RH10	YES	YES	Will help everyone not just wildlife - kids elderly
RH10	YES	YES	Should not be allow in water
RH11	YES	YES	Use extender lead if want more control
RH11	YES	YES	only around the lake
BN10	YES	YES	They should be better controlled
RH11	YES	YES	Not all the way round

RH10	YES	YES	
RH10	YES	YES	
RH10	YES	YES	Around the lake only
RH10	YES	YES	
RH10	YES	YES	
RH10	YES	YES	
RH10	YES	YES	Mainly in summer
RH16	YES	YES	
	YES	YES	Warden around Park, A patrolling areas at random times, making sure dogs are on leads and carrying poo bags. Fine them
RH10	YES	YES	well behaved dogs shouldn't be punished
RH10	YES	YES	
RH10	YES	YES	Need for more info when young wildlife about
RH10	YES	YES	Depends on behaviour of the dog
RH11	YES	YES	At discretion depending on breed
RH11	YES	YES	Please make this happen
RH10	YES	YES	
RH10	YES	YES	Is this going to apply to other parts of the park or just lake
RH10	YES	YES	I think all dogs should be on leads, not only for wildlife but for those who fear them
U/K	YES	YES	It's a shame that a selfish few who cannot control their dogs has led to this. I can't see how it will be enforced. The respectful dog owners will abide
U/K	YES	YES	I always keep my dog on the lead in the park because he is a sight hound. However if this is what it take to keep all the water birds safe then YES keep dogs on lead around the lake
U/K	YES	YES	Yes just keep on leads around the lake. It's a shame but it's an animal instinct kicking in sometimes. If that's what it takes to protect wildlife it has to be done

## Comments received to the Tilgate Park email address

	Comment
1	<p>Hello</p> <p>I read the article about a public consultation regarding dogs being kept on leads in Tilgate Park.</p> <p>We walk our Labrador every day in the park, we let her off the lead as she loves to run around. We are very vigilant about where she goes and what she is doing, we would never allow her to injure an animal. There are not many places you can allow your dog to enjoy a good run and be free of the lead, we really appreciate the freedom she gets in the park.</p> <p>We hope that you do not take away this freedom because of irresponsible dog owners.</p>
2	<p>It would be useful to have at least one park in Crawley that is entirely dog-free. There are so many places and parks in Crawley for dog owners to exercise their animals that it wouldn't be a great imposition to bar them from one park, particularly when there have been several instances of dog attacks.</p> <p>Given that Tilgate Park has perhaps the highest proportion of vulnerable wildlife it might be a good idea to make this the 'dog-free' park.</p>
3	<p>I wanted to share with you experiences that my wife has had whilst she runs around the lake in Tilgate about 3 to 4 times a week.</p> <p>She has been attacked a number of times by dogs this year that are off the lead where the owner has no control and seems to think it's just one of those things that the dog is allowed to run up and either jump up or even bite. My wife has had actual flesh wounds and damaged cloths, so we think it is a good idea for dogs to be kept on their leads around the lake. If people want to let their dogs off their leads they can go up into the park area where there are less people and the dogs can run more freely.</p>
4	<p>Dear Sirs</p> <p>I was very saddened to read of another swan being mauled to death by a dog in Tilgate Park.</p> <p>I am no longer a dog owner, but as an animal lover with a young grandson, whose dog was once attacked in Tilgate Park, I really can't see why there shouldn't be a rule that all dogs should be kept on leads in the Park.</p> <p>This would go a long way to ensuring the safety, not only of local wildlife, but also the many children who use the park.</p> <p>From responsible dog owners point-of-view, you can now get "stretchy" leads, which give dogs some degree of freedom, with the ability to control the dog if necessary. This would give the council the necessary powers to prosecute the tiny minority of irresponsible dog owners.</p> <p>Anyone who really wanted to let their dog off the lead could go up onto the remote areas of the golf-course, as I used to when I had dogs.</p>
5	<p>My mother and sister spoke to your colleague last Thursday about our puppy being attacked by another dog in Tilgate Park. With his request this is my statement.</p> <p>On Thursday 31st August, my family and I met up at Tilgate Park, 4 adults and 3 children.</p> <p>At 1.30 pm, we were walking in the natural woods at the side of the walled area where the Maze and Cafe are situated. My son had our puppy on the lead and was walking about 10 metres ahead of us with his two younger cousins. It was at this point he saw a female dog walker approaching with 5 dogs on leads. She was wearing a blue jacket and had blondish short hair.</p> <p>My 11 year old son called over to her asking if her dogs were friendly, she confirmed they were, two of the very large long haired Golden Retrievers were already off their leads. My son said they did indeed appear to be friendly. She</p>

	<p>then apparently went about letting a third dog off its lead, this dog was a muzzled white English Bull Terrier! The Bull Terrier immediately ran towards my 16 week old puppy and three children with myself and the other adults a short distance away, having not interacted with us at all. The Bull Terrier had a Beige muzzle and ran straight to our puppy and leaped on her. My son continued holding our dog`s lead and started screaming and shouting to get the dog off, which was proceeding to attack our puppy. It was at this point we were alerted to what was happening. My instinct was to run screaming towards them to scare the dog away followed by my sister and mum. At this point I didn't know if the dog had attacked any of the children! The Retrievers were bounding around and jumping up as well. When I reached my son I realised the dog was muzzled. Thank God otherwise it would have killed our puppy! It was ferociously trying to bite our puppy's neck through its muzzle and clawing at her upturned body. It was truly distressing and traumatic, the children had all witnessed this. I yanked the Bull Terrier off our puppy and tried to pick our puppy up . Her lead had now been dropped by my son and she took flight. luckily she ran into some thick undergrowth and we managed to catch her. She was in a right state and trembling.</p> <p>There was some shouting at the woman but we didn't think to take photos or details as we were all so shaken up. It was a very traumatic experience which has stayed with all of us for days. Very luckily our puppy seems to be okay at the moment but this has made her and us nervous around dogs off leads.</p> <p>Thank you for the time your colleague spent with my mother and sister the other day and I hope this email helps support you in resolving the issues you have been having with dog walkers that behave in an irresponsible way.</p> <p>Please let me know of any outcome from this.</p>
6	<p>I saw the article in the Crawley Observer about the recent dog attacks on swans in Tilgate Park. There are notices around the lake requesting dog owners to keep their pets under control and on leads but these are ignored by the majority of dog owners who take the attitude that it does not apply to them and their pet. Following a recent heart attack and subsequent bypass surgery I regularly walk in park for exercise and have frequently been pestered by dogs jumping up at me. The last time it happened I was left with muddy paw prints on my trousers and top. A young lady did apologise but it is these sort of people who think it acceptable for their badly behaved dog to run wild. There is a grassy area where dogs can be let off the lead but on and around the pathways they must be kept on a short lead.</p>
7	<p>Hi there,</p> <p>I often run around Tilgate lake and last year witnessed the two tiny signets being mauled and both killed by a dog! It was very upsetting and sad to see. Me and my friend who was running with me helped the lady hold her two dogs away whilst she tried to save the signets but it was too late! The owner was very upset and said it was out of character for her dogs but I disagree. Dogs are predators and as lovely and friendly as they might normally be they will chase after little animals, it's not their fault!</p> <p>I therefore totally agree that dogs should be kept on leads around the lake area. Dog owners need to realise that although their dogs maybe nice natured, calm and loving family members, they are animals and they can chase and attack smaller animals and that's just not acceptable when they are so often killed or badly injured!</p> <p>I hope the 'dogs on leads' rule at areas around the lake is put into place as soon as possible to stop these unnecessary attacks from continuing!</p>
8	<p>To Whom It May Concern,</p> <p>I just want to say a few words in support of dogs on leads. Not only does the wildlife but also our children need protection. My family had horrible experience with off the lead dog. It bit my 3-year-old daughter at Tilgate</p>

	<p>Park this summer. Crime reference - xxxxxx. I am sure that this is not an isolated incident therefore something must be done.</p> <p>Maybe putting all dogs on leads is not an ideal solution, alternative options like dog muzzles or a fenced play area specifically designed for dogs should be considered.</p> <p>Thank you for looking into ways of keeping the wildlife and our families safe at our favorite local park.</p>
9	<p><i>I am horrified at the mauling of another swan by a dog without a lead, what are their owners thinking of to allow this to happen. If it had been a child the dog went for would the result be the same, I wonder.</i></p> <p><i>I really do think that dogs should be on a lead, even a long lead, in this park since the birds are not safe and so many families comes with many children, and I hope that something will be done about this since I understand that the dog was seen.</i></p>
10	<p>Dogs should be on leads. Over the years I've lived near by the cygnet's get attacked .Its very upsetting.</p>
11	<p>I would like to see dogs on leads around tilgate lake as I find dogs mauling swans upsetting. I realise a lot og dogs do not go after swans or the other birds . I go to tilgate park on my scooter and enjoy riding slowly around the lake and enjoy watching dogs walking with their owners but this has been to upsetting for a lot of us</p>
12	<p>Mr husband and I were deeply shocked and saddened to read in Crawley Observer that a third cygnet had died from horrific injuries after being mauled by dogs in Tilgate Park.</p> <p>On our walks in Tilgate Park, we had been delighted to watch 7 cygnets grow from tiny chicks into beautiful cygnets. In previous years, cygnets had disappeared but this time we were glad to still count 7 cygnets until last month, first one, then three went missing – now we know the reason.</p> <p>The horror of reading that the male parent swan was attacked and gladly saved was followed by warning/appeal notices to keep dogs on leads but apparently these requests were ignored and now only 4 cygnets remain!</p> <p>As swans are supposed to have Royal protection; perhaps this could be regarded as Treason with apt sentences for disregarding a Royal Rule?</p> <p>The request for support of a rule that all dogs MUST be kept on leads is certainly needed and should include punishment or high fines for disre- garding:</p> <p>Dogs should also be discouraged from swimming near swans:</p> <p>Tilgate Park is a wonderful place for all to enjoy its multifarious outdoor pleasures: The lovely lake is enhanced by wildlife, particularly the grace- graceful swans: Midst tumultuous traumatic evens in the World today; it is a Blessings to have a place of beauty and tranquillity to share.</p> <p>We are sure most park visitors will support a law that prohibits dogs to be allowed off leads in Tilgate Park. Another rule to help pedestrians to enjoy a peaceful walk, would be to ensure cyclists use bells on bikes and that they take extra care when cycling on paths - intended for pedestrians:</p> <p>Most people we meet in Tilgate Park are charmingly friendly and surely will be dismayed and horrified to know of the fate of those dear cygnets.</p>
13	<p>How many more of the wildlife in Tilgate are to be attacked and killed by dogs running loose? The signs displayed this summer have been totally ignored by some irresponsible dog owners who do not seem to understand that control means dogs should be kept on a lead.</p> <p>Many times when walking in Tilgate we have had dogs, sometimes wet, coming and jumping up at us leaving our clothes wet and muddy. The usual comment from the owners is “it is alright he/she will not hurt you”.</p> <p>The Council must take action or are they waiting for a small child to be attacked by a out of control dog?</p>



	<p>Tilgate Park is a wonderful place where many birds nest bringing up their young for people to enjoy. The Council must act now.</p>
14	<p>I am a dog walker who walks his dogs in the park on a daily basis. Having avidly watched these birds grow it was desperately upsetting to hear that one has been killed by a dog, I understand another fell fowl of discarded fishing tackle recently too. With the male parent having also been attacked by dogs earlier this year I feel it would be most sensible to establish an on the lead area in the park I do have a couple of queries.... firstly how is this to be enforced. As it stands it is very rare to see any form of Warden around the lakes. Will additional patrols be put on?</p> <p>Secondly given the number of bodies of water where birds and indeed other wildlife reside would it not be simpler to introduce an on lead rule for the whole park east of the Tilgate huts down to trees on the west side of the lake.. this would simplify the matter of where the on lead zone begins and provides a sufficient buffer to protect wildlife, it would also prevent deer being chased within the area.</p> <p>As a counter point to the on lead restrictions could not an enclosed off lead area be provided for dogs... that way those owners wishing the let their dogs run could do so in a controlled environment . Just above the top car park, by the Smith and Western there is a fenced enclosure which seems to be rarely used... it is a good size and would offer a safe area for dogs to be exercised off lead with little modification other than a suitable gate... many areas have implemented these, Withdean Park being a notable example.</p>
15	<p>I am writing to voice my opinion that there <b>should</b> be a dogs on leads policy around the area of Tilgate lake where the swan family spends most of their time on the opposite side of the lake from the Smith &amp; Western.</p> <p>This is already signposted, but nobody pays attention to it.</p> <p>Perhaps it would be worth a gate across the path or something in order to help differentiate the areas?</p> <p>If this is not possible, then perhaps a dog on lead policy during cygnet season, at least during the busy parts of the days when dogs can get excitable if there are many around.</p> <p>In my opinion, the cygnet being killed is a lesson that should be learned from, and acted upon. How many near misses have there been which go unreported...?</p> <p>It would have to be enforced (on the spot fines?) and without a gate or if it cannot be localised, then the policy should cover the lake. At the end of the day, it is the swans' home, not the dogs'.</p>
16	<p>As a dog owner and walker, I strongly believe that dogs should not be made to be on lead at the park. The additional effort should go on educating users on the safety of all at the park.</p>
17	<p>We have a large German Shepherd Dog called XXXX and he regularly attends the park with me, my partner and our family.</p> <p>We have heard about this dogs on lead business and if you go forward with it then it would be a great shame.</p> <p>Everyone is being punished for a handful of irresponsible owners over many years. It's no proportionate.</p> <p>I have been reading Facebook comments on Spotted:Crawley Facebook page and people are making very good points.</p> <p>I also work for Sussex Police as an Investigator, at Crawley Police Station and have dealt with many dog bite cases. So I have a good perspective on this.</p> <p>The only people to follow a dogs on lead policy are the ones whose dog's are not a problem anyway. The good owners would follow the policy and watch as the ones causing all the problems still do not follow the rules and get away with it.</p>

	How are you planning to enforce this?
18	<p>I wholeheartedly support the suggestion of a dogs on leads policy at Tilgate Park. The loss of another cygnet proves that, whilst there are some responsible dog owners who exercise their dogs in the park, there are still some (hopefully a minority) that do not control their animals. Sadly this means that all dog owners responsible of otherwise have lost their right to have dogs off leads.</p> <p>As a regular visitor to the park, I regularly see dogs away from their owners, approaching small children, animals, other dogs. I have also witnessed dogs going to the toilet out of the eyesight of the owner and the mess not being picked up simply because the owner is not aware that it has been left.</p> <p>There are many outside spaces where responsible dog owners can let their animals off the lead but somewhere as busy, beautiful and family oriented as Tilgate Park, should not be one of them.</p>
19	<p>Personally I would support a dogs on leads policy. It's not just the swans but it is known that dogs, even on leads, have a detrimental effect on breeding birds in general. Dogs on leads during the breeding season, say March to September, seems to be a reasonable compromise.</p> <p>There would probably need to be two designated areas; 1 from a few meters upstream from the main spillway to the silt dam spillway and 2. from the turnoff from the path between the lakes to near the main lawn.</p> <p>This would need to be signed and would work best if people had to walk through a gate at either end. (The gated area at Buchan Park seems to work well). All a pain I'm sure you could do without.</p> <p>I wonder if there is any potential for using the old horse paddock as a run around area for dogs?</p>
20	<p>I believe dogs should be put on leads in and around tilgate, not only for the poor swans but for children like my son who is 5 and refuses to visit tilgate park as he is petrified of dogs, if people want a free run area for their dog maybe a fenced area could be put up for these dogs Martine Barnes</p>
21	<p>I've just seen your post about thoughts on dogs on lead around the lake following the poor cygnet losing its life.</p> <p>I personally think that around the lake only, it should be "on leads".</p> <p>I'm a dog owner &amp; I have 2 reactive dogs. So mine are always on a lead. But I'm a true believer in if your dog is near wildlife, then pop it on a lead til you are passed it &amp; at a safe distance.</p> <p>I also don't think that it's the answer to the problem. I can't see how you will police this.</p> <p>It will end up with the responsible owners being on leads &amp; the irresponsible ones that caused this in the 1st place will still be off lead as they don't think rules apply to them!</p> <p>Having 2 reactive dogs, I know 1st hand just how irresponsible many owners can be. Mine are on a lead &amp; so many people think it's ok to let their dog come bounding up to us despite me asking them to call their dog back.</p> <p>I do wonder if this would be perfect timing for Crawley council to set up an allocated private area for responsible owners to book to let their dogs off lead to have a good run. A good area, secure field with good fencing. People could book online/pay online by the half hour or hour.</p> <p>There are no places locally that I can take mine too as one of mine jumps &amp; can easily clear 5ft fences. So the one for example, at turners hill isnt an option for me as its not secure enough.</p> <p>I think you'd get a lot of people wanting to use it, especially with a confirmed case of Alabama rot now in crawley and many owners being really disheartened with the sheer amount of mindless owners in Crawley.</p> <p>It's a question that's often asked on forums/various fb pages.</p>

	<p>It would also raise funds for CBC (which is like to see some go to charity or back into Tilgate).</p> <p>That's my thoughts on it all.</p>
22	<p>I just wanted to say that I completely agree with the proposal to keep all dogs on leads around Tilgate lake. I am very saddened to hear about the death of the cygnet. I have lived in Crawley all my life and grew up enjoying the park but now do not like walking around Tilgate because of the dogs (although I use the Nature Centre a lot). I am a great animal lover but have 2 small children. Dogs not being on leads really worries me as there are a lot of people around Tilgate park who don't seem to have control of their dogs (luckily the majority do) I worry for the wildlife and I worry for the children. Also, last time I went, my 3 year old stepped in dog poo and walking around the lake I saw a lot of it. I also refer you to Spotted: Crawley on Facebook. I forwarded them the details of this public consultation and a lot of people have commented.</p>
23	<p>I think you should have a dogs on lead sign, but just around the lake Unfortunately people cannot always control their dogs so those dogs will get down by the lake without a lead on and some owners don't care &amp; will not put leads on But, I think it should be tried to save the wildlife</p>
24	<p>I would agree with introducing this policy of dogs on leads. This would make me feel much safer at the park and more likely to visit with my child. Currently I avoid the park due to dogs off of leads running around, this doesn't make me feel safe with a child. Owners always say there dog is fine but you don't know that and I have had dogs coming running up and not been able to see an owner around at all. I feel that this policy would make the park much more family friendly.</p>
25	<p>I'm writing to you In support of a 'Dogs on Leads' policy around tilgate lake. The wildlife around this area should be protected, as well as those as who are around the lake with small children. I have many times witnessed dogs off lead chasing/barking at ducks etc and jumping up at my, and others small children. It would be nice if this area of the park could be enjoyed knowing that dogs are on leads and aren't going to try and harm any wildlife or people.</p>
26	<p>Ive seen your poster Re. Dogs on leads and am supportive of your proposal. Unfortunately this is a case where the minority ruin it for the majority where control of their dogs are concerned, so in order to protect the swans and other birds on the lake i fully support dogs being on a lead near the lake to protect the wildlife. I hope there is sufficient resource to police this.</p>
27	<p>I'm absolutely in agreement that Tilgate lake needs a 'dogs on leads' policy. I live on Titmus Drive and regularly visit the lake and see the swans. I have previously quite clearly expressed my views on social media after the attack on the swan family on both occasions when the Dad was attacked and again after the Cygnet. It appears that after each occasion, the public who own dogs either do not learn or do not care. I was devastated enough after the Cygnet was killed and would be even more so if I hear of another attack. Something has to be done, or something has to change. It is the swans home afterall. Please seriously consider introducing a policy, for the sake of the innocent wildlife.</p>
28	<p>Yes I think it is a good idea to have dogs on leads in Tilgate Park around the lake area. I have walked my dogs there for years though always on a lead. I have watched many dog owner who think it is highly entertaining to let their dogs off to jump in the lake and swim after the ducks, geese and swans. They also allow their out of control dogs to run after other people's dogs that are on</p>

	<p>the lead and run up to other people with children who are enjoying their time in the park but may not want the attention of an overexcited barking dog. Please introduce this as soon as possible so we can all enjoy watching the wonderful wildlife on the lake without the harassment of out of control dogs. I keep mine on leads while in the park/lake area and only allow them off lead in the forest when there are no people or other dogs about.</p>
29	<p>Just a message in response to your post regarding dogs in leads at Tilgate park. I understand and appreciate that this is a very tricky situation as ultimately it comes down to responsible owners, which unfortunately cannot always be guaranteed.</p> <p>As someone who has walked dogs at Tilgate park for the best part of 30 years I think it would be such a shame to ban all dogs off leads. It seems so unfair to many responsible owners and gentle mannered dogs.</p> <p>I have noticed recently however, that some members of public put up notices in regard to the Cygnets and dog owners. I personally took note of this.</p> <p>Could I instead suggest perhaps designated areas where it is essential for dogs to be on leads at particular times of year with official notices.</p> <p>This would allow the safety of wild life but would not be so so overly extreme as to ban all dogs off leads.</p>
30	<p>I think that a dog's on leads policy should be brought in. The wildlife needs protecting and there are plenty of playing fields surrounding Crawley where dogs can run freely and aren't a risk to wildlife.</p>
31	<p>I recently read that you were considering to put a ban on dogs off the leads at the lake area. I think this is slightly crazy and completely unfair as you are discriminating on a group of people purely due to an incident. You wouldn't be telling adults they aren't allowed their kids near the lake as they are feeding the swans and ducks bread which makes them ill or sits on the lake decomposing which then makes the birds ill. You also wouldn't tell the bike riders they cannot use the path as they race around far too quickly and run over not only wildlife but everything in their way. You wouldn't be telling the teenagers that destroy the whole park by burnings things, leaving rubbish and throwing rocks at the birds they are banned. So why pick on a group of people because it is an easy fix that won't actually resolve the issue? And how would you even police or enforce this?</p> <p>I'm a dog walker and my two love to swim in the lakes, especially in the hot water, to keep cool. I ensure that when I'm walking and the birds are out the water the dogs go back on the lead. I avoid them and the area they are in as they actually would attack my dogs. If you are going to police this would it not make more sense to pin point everyone that is disrupting the birds? That includes kids feeding them bread, throwing stones at them, cyclists nearly running them over and dog walkers that don't have control of their dogs. This solution will reduce the chance of injury to the birds.</p> <p>I truly hope that this idea does not get put into practice as it is discrimination and also will stop a group of people, who use the park all year round and pay for parking, stop using this beautiful park.</p>
32	<p>Not sure whether this is the correct email address but I saw a poster on the notice board at the lake that asked for views on the request for dogs to be kept on leads at the lake.</p> <p>We are regular walkers round Tilgate Lake and it has been sad this summer to see the Swan family suffer from dogs not being on leads.</p> <p>There is loads of woodland away from the lake that dogs could use to run freely but on the footpaths around the lake we think it is a must for dogs to be on a lead. We have ourselves experienced dogs jumping up at us also upsetting the joggers and fishermen. Small children can be frightened by excitable dogs. It wouldn't take much to introduce this rule.</p>

33	<p>In response to the consultation regarding dogs on leads in Tilgate Park, I would like to object to the proposal. I was horrified to hear of the attack on the swans, and believe that action of some kind is definitely required; however I would suggest that more appropriate action would include more visible staff with regular patrols, volunteer "swan watch" conducted by concerned locals, and more effective prosecution of offenders, perhaps even supported by cctv or similar. I for one would happily donate funds to this cause and imagine many others would too.</p> <p>Unfortunately the type of individual that allows their dog to savage wildlife and leave them for dead is unlikely to follow any new rules regarding the use of leads - meaning the only people who will follow the restriction will be those law abiding citizens who will not be causing the problem in the first place. This will only be resolved by active prevention activities such as those suggested above.</p> <p>The I, and many thousands of others, regularly exercise my dog at Tilgate Park and one of the great joys is seeing her running through the grounds, having fun and exploring - this won't be possible on a lead. It is also extremely dangerous for dogs to swim with a lead on, and so this will mean a de facto ban on dogs swimming in the lake.</p> <p>Imposing this lead restriction on everybody will severely damage the enjoyment and usage of Tilgate, and mean that I will almost certainly be forced to visit Buchan Park or St Leonard's forest instead.</p>
34	<p>I thing tilgate park is big enough for everyone. But around the lake and the grassed area leading down to the lake should be a dog free zone or at least dog should be kept on leads.</p> <p>Nobody can say their dog is 100 percent safe. We have heard of 2 incidents involving wildlife this year, but i am sure their have been more that have not been reported. It a matter of time before its a child is hurt.</p> <p>Last summer I had a dog run into the back of my legs and knocked me to the ground. I was shaken up and a bit bruised. If it had been a child or someone senior in years it could have been at lot worse.</p> <p>Tilgate park is a large place and there are plenty of other areas that dogs could be let off their leads.</p> <p>Please make tilgate park a safe place for everyone.</p>
35	<p>I am a dog owner who uses all of Tilgate regularly, come rain, sun, flood or snow.</p> <p>If we are walking by the lake I always check to see where the swans are and avoid them. Having said that I have a Labrador who naturally leaps into the 'dog swimming' area by the dam every time we visit there.</p> <p>It is a great shame to hear about the damage to the swans having watched the babies grow from tiny cygnets and the adults stepping up to parenthood.</p> <p>Firstly I think it is a shame but entirely reasonable to request that people keep their dog on a lead when walking the path around the lake. Especially in the breeding season and when the park is packed with 'summer walkers'. There is plenty of space to roam off the lead away from the lake area. Perhaps there could be a similar system as to where and when dogs are allowed on beaches.</p> <p>Unfortunately there are too many dog owners, (I use the term 'owners' loosely as that would indicate some level of responsibility) who disregard even the basics of good citizenship. For example why is there always dog poo right next to the bins? - that goes beyond laziness.</p> <p>I think the other suggestion of using CC-TV is an excellent idea. Not only for watching what the dogs are up to, but it would be great if those responsible for deliberately leaving litter and those causing vandalism could be called to account.</p> <p>Tilgate Park and surrounding area are great - any time of year. Personally I prefer it when the sun, and the bugs, have gone.</p>
36	<p>Hi there,</p>

	<p>I'm just emailing to register my view on the proposed 'dogs off leads' ban at Tilgate Park.</p> <p>I'm a regular dog walker, and I also loved seeing the young cygnets grow over the course of the Summer.</p> <p>It was sad and frustrating to hear that a swan had been injured owing to a dog attack, and it was even worse to hear that a couple of the cygnets were attacked too.</p> <p>However I really feel that if a dog is well trained, of sound temperament and has a watchful owner, then there's no problem. I feel that a blanket ban on dogs off leads would be a huge shame owing to the fact that it's such a great space for dogs to enjoy exploring without causing any harm.</p> <p>Why should a few ignorant and inconsiderate people ruin it for the many? Raising awareness of the issue would seem to be enough to prompt people to think, and mature adults ought to be able to assess whether their dog should be kept on a lead or not.</p> <p>Furthermore, the park goes through seasons and busy/quiet periods throughout the day - so rules that seem appropriate on a busy Summer Saturday might seem completely over board on a quiet Tuesday in Autumn. It seems like a ban would be hard to enforce, too...</p> <p>Anyway, just writing to air my views. I've noticed more signage reminding dog walkers to respect the wildlife around the park and that seems like a great step!</p>
37	<p>I am a dog owner &amp; am very sad that all dogs should be punished for a few dog attacks. Yes the signet lost its life but please don't make Tilgate a 'dogs on lead' place.</p> <p>Statistically cats kill 275 MILLION animals a year &amp; no one is bothered by this, but because it is a dog, it is big news. No one would ever tell a cat owner not to let their cats outside. Cats also go to the toilet which their owners don't clear up, usually in my gravel drive or flower bed!</p> <p>I think if Tilgate start a dogs on lead policy then it will spread to local parks then I suspect, all public places which will be a travesty for dogs mental health. Maybe a muzzle policy would be fairer for dogs. Dogs can't bite with a muzzle on.</p> <p>Please don't take away a dog owners joy to see their dogs run free.</p>
38	<p>If, and it is a big IF, there are to be restrictions placed on dog walking around the lake, might I suggest that between the dates of 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September each year, that dog owners are requested (by the placing of signs) to keep dogs on leads along the red line shown on the attached map.</p>
39	<p>I would like to give my view about dogs on leads in Tilgate Park. I believe this is the way to do it by emailing to this email address.</p> <p>As someone who lives very close to the park and uses the park regularly for my self and grandchildren I have to say what a wonderful place it is in so many ways. The lakes, the park the Nature Centre and the forest make it a place for everyone. It is good to see so many people using the park for so many different purposes and community events. The only down side for me is the way that some dog owners have very little control of their dogs and they rampage around regardless of small children or wildlife. Seeing a dogs on leads policy in the most popular places in the park, like around the lake, and the main park area would be a great improvement for me. I can imagine this would be unpopular with dog owners maybe but benefits would be appreciated, and improve the quality of the experience for the non dog walking public.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion</p>
40	<p>I feel quite strongly regarding keeping dogs on the lead around tilgate lake. Though most dog owners are responsible I have seen some disregarding the signs about the wildlife. There are plenty of areas where dogs can run free. I used to own a dog and he was always put on a lead while around the lake so not to annoy fishermen and water fowl.</p>

## Appendix B

### Examples of Complaints to Crawley Borough Council: Dec 2020 – August 2021

8 August 2021	dog owners at tilgate park, dogs off leads, dog poo on the paths, no signage instructing arrogant selfish dog owners to keep dogs on leads, dogs on long leads charging at people that don't share their love of domesticated wild animals, in spite of recent swan and cygnet deaths owners still think it's ok to allow their rottweilers and staffs to roam around
15 May 2021	<p>We are aware that dogs should be on a lead walking around Tilgate lake for swan, duck, animal safety, but also because it has become more popular and busy during lockdown. There have been numerous dog attacks and many dog walkers do not seem to know the rules or dog etiquette.</p> <p>However, in their defence I am conscious I have not seen any notices regarding dogs to be on the lead! Therefore an I suggest you rectify this immediately, to avoid accident, and protection our our wildlife.</p> <p>The duck, geese and swans have so little safe nesting sites in comparison to other parks which is also disappointing, so let's give them protection from the dogs.</p> <p>It would also be good to see the community police park rangers actually patrolling the park to enforce the rules too.</p>
15 May 2021	<p>This is regarding Tilgate Park.</p> <p>There should be far more notices at Tilgate Park - particularly by the big lake because dogs are off their leads and are harassing the swans &amp; cygnets as well as the geese &amp; goslings. It was very upsetting to see that yesterday afternoon.</p> <p>There should also be far more signs asking people to not feed bread to the ducks, swans etc.</p>
3 May 2021	<p>Loads of dogs off the lead around the lake in Tilgate Park.</p> <p>Not sure what can be done about this but rules are being ignored. Makes visit unpleasant and stressful for non dog-owning visitors.</p>
15 April 2021	<p>I'm getting increasingly frustrated with taking my children for picnics and being accosted my dogs sniffing around our food. It is happening way too often. I am all for dogs getting out &amp; having a run around, but at the same time why can't every day people go out and enjoy a picnic without this happening? My children are petrified of dogs. It isn't fair that dogs should be kept on leads all the time and it also isn't fair that anyone like my children should have to refrain from enjoying outdoor spaces too. Everyone should be able to enjoy these spaces together.</p> <p>I feel like there should be A LOT more signs and information regarding dog owners being responsible for their dogs at ALL times. On the most recent occasion that this has happened at Tilgate park, by the lake, the dog came and took the food out of a child's hand. This not only ruined our time and traumatised my children but the dog could have eaten something potentially harmful to it and the owner was nowhere to be seen. We had to look around for them, only for them to be sitting chatting on a bench with no idea where the dog was or what it was doing.</p> <p>This is not an isolated incident.</p> <p>I think it would be nice if in places like this, particularly where people regularly go for picnics that there should be signs for dogs to be strictly kept on leads and it be made very clear where they can take their dogs to have a run around.</p> <p>Thank you for your time</p>
5 April 2021	<p>Had a confrontation with a dog owner today at Tilgate Park lake while walking our two dogs on leads. His dog came up to ours and was running up to small children. I politely told him to put his dog on a lead . He said he came everyday</p>

	<p>and didn't need to .I told him there was signs , he said where , there was only one sign and that was three years old ! His wasn't the only dog off leads around the park . You need to put up more prominent signage before there an attack of some type as unfortunately there are too many irresponsible dog owners. Example what has happened in the midlands this week !</p>
8 February 2021	<p>On Friday last week around 7:20pm, there was an incident involving a dangerous dog which attacked the resident, the police were notified as well as the community warden, the resident advises that the Warden did not appear to be interested in what happened, although it was clearly stated that the dog had attacked the resident, the warden stated that it was a dog on dog attack and could not have been listening to what had been said, the warden has said that there will be no action as the resident cannot provide an address for where the couple with the dog who attacked live.</p> <p>The resident tried to advise that he could not possibly know where they lived, but went on to explain that he sees them on a daily basis whilst walking his dog in Broadfield, he gave a thorough description of the couple and the dog (black Labrador) he is very concerned that this dog could be a danger to other members of the public and that the warden doesn't seem to care.</p> <p>Resident has message that were exchanged between himself and the warden if needs to be provided.</p>
18 December 2020	<p>Yesterday myself and my daughter were in Tilgate park. She is allergic to dogs and also has asthma and was carrying her 5m in a sling, and I am disabled and unsteady on my feet. I asked a dog walker to pull in her dog from its long leash as it was too close. She refused, was very rude and we had to step of the path into the mud. She then turned around to get behind us and let it get too close behind me - I'm not allergic, but I worried about getting hair on my clothes which would effect my daughter, so I asked the dog walker to walk ahead of us so we could keep our distance and told her it was against the law to let the dog touch us. After consulting with her man friend she turned to return to us with the dog. We couldn't run and felt terribly threatened. Only by screaming at her did I frighten her down the path, and they then turned as if to follow us to the car park. I worried she was doing this to threaten us from behind again so I ranted on and threatened her with violence, she was a bit shaken by that and she turned off down a different path. Her last comment was that my daughter shouldn't come to the park if she has a problem. We couldn't believe that happened, and, as the park should be accessible to all we wondered if you could put signs up advising dog walkers that they were responsible for their dogs and that dogs should not be allowed to touch strangers whenever possible. Since my daughters allergies have become serious we have to ask people constantly to rein in their dogs - most comply, although some are very rude. Walks in any park is almost impossible for us but we desperately wanted to take the baby to the zoo and couldn't believe that the short walk back would be so problematic or that I had to resort to threats to scare this entitled woman away. With the unfortunate demise of XXXXXX I wondered if this was a good time to talk about asthma and making people aware of the danger of letting dogs near asthmatic people? I can't believe that this woman would risk my daughters life in this way, especially when she was carrying a baby in a sling in the middle of a park no where near help. I didn't have time to get my phone out to video this (I was too scared of her escalating behaviour so screaming at her seemed more likely to stop her quickly) so I can't complain to the police about her as I have no evidence, but I wondered if there was something the council could do as a preventative measure? Thank you for listening, I realise there's not much you can do but just a few signs through the park would be brilliant.</p>



## Appendix C

### Pros & Cons for each option

#### Option 1: Maintain current position

Pros	Cons
Continues to respond to most recent public consultation response	CBC do not enforce published rules – reputational issue
Nuisance dog owners still challenged and encouraged to put dogs on leads	No enforcement powers to support compliance - some dogs continue to cause nuisance without sanction
Does not require additional resources or divert from other priorities	Community Warden patrols sporadic and dependent on other priorities
Responsible dog owners not impacted	Signage replacement

#### Option 2: Re-double education / information efforts

Pros	Cons
Continues to respond to most recent public consultation	CBC do not enforce published rules – reputational issue
Nuisance dog owners still challenged and encouraged to put dogs on leads	Diverts resources from other priorities (Community Wardens / legal / comms)
Responsible dog owners not impacted	No enforcement powers to support compliance
No enforcement related costs incurred	Some dogs continue to cause nuisance without sanction
Dogs have rest of Park estate to exercise 'off lead'	Cost of signage (purchase, installation, maintenance, replacement)

### Option 3: Option 2 + Enforcement measures

Pros	Cons
CBC enforce their published rules	May heighten public expectations (can only enforce what is seen)
Nuisance behaviour is proactively challenged and enforced, acting as a deterrent	Does not respond to most recent public consultation
Responds positively to public concerns	Diverts resources from other priorities (Community Wardens / legal / comms)
Dogs have rest of Park estate to exercise 'off lead'	Penalises responsible dog owners
	Enforcement options have resource implications (prosecution / implementation)
	Does not respond to most recent public consultation